(c) No such report has been received by the Government.

(d) Does not arise.

Report of National Commission on Agricultural Labour

7669. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission on Agricultural Labour has submitted its report;

(b) if so, when was the report submitted and details of major observations/ recommendations made;

(c) what specific action has been taken by Government on various major recommendations involving action by Central/ State authorities recommendation-wise;

(d) reasons for delay in implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission; and

(e) what specific steps have been taken by Government during the last 4 years for improving the conditions of unorganised working force and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (e) The Government has not set up any National Commission exclusively for the Agricultural Labour. However, a National Commission on Rural Labour was set up by the Government on 11-8-87 to go into the problems of rural labour which include Agricultural Labour.

The National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL) has submitted its report on 31st July, 1991. Some of the major recommendations of the NCRL are as follows:

(i) Free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14:

(ii) Prohibition of child labour in all occupations and processes;

(iii) A "National Credit Fund for Women" for poor women so that they could get credit without any collateral security upto a specified financial limit;

(iv) Fixation of a National basic minimum wage of Rs. 20/- per day at December, 1990 prices and a provision for increase of wages automatically every six months on the basis of rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI);

(v) Self-employment programmes like the IRDP by linking them to area development plans to be formulated by the elected institutions within the scheme of decentralisation;

(vi) Ban on labour-displacing mechanisation in agriculture, like the use of combine harvesters;

(vii) A more concerted policy to assist and provide relief to the migrant labour;

(viii) Credit for consumption to rural labour families at lower rate of interest;

(ix) Easier accessibility of institutional credit to rural labour households through cooperative Banks.

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO SOCIAL SECURITY:

(i) Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923:

The definition of 'workmen' be amended to cover all the rural workers.

(ii) Old age pension:

Old age pension at Rs. 100 per month be paid to all males and females above age of 60 subject to income limits prescribed. Destitutes and handicapped persons, ever if below the age of 60 are eligible at present for old age pension in several States. This may be continued. While it is appreciated that it may

not be feasible to withdraw the relaxation given to widows/deserted wives, the Commission is of the view that they should be enabled to earn their livelihood and for this purpose, a suitable rehabilitation and training programme should be evolved.

(iii) Personal Accident Insurance:

The coverage under Personal Accident Insurance and Social Security Schemes operated by GIC should be enlarged. In addition, in so far as unorganised workers are concerned, Group Life Insurance Scheme should be considered with the premium met by the State.

(iv) Maternity Benefit:

All rural women above the age of 18 and belonging to families whose total annual income does not exceed Rs. 6,400 at 1990-91 prices will be entitled, up to a maximum of two live births, maternity benefit for a period of 12 weeks for each birth and the amount of benefit will be at the daily minimum wage rate for unskilled labour in agriculture.

(v) Disability benefit:

Disability benefit in respect of all cases of loss of earning capacity of 70 per cent or more, and not necessarily occupational or employment related, must be available, on par with old age pension and subject to some income criterion, to all eligible persons between the age group of 18 and 60 years. The existing efforts for rehabilitation of the disabled will have to be considerably strengthened. An expert group may examine the questions relating to the manner of determining the extent of disability and incapacity to work as well as the support scheme needed for them.

(vi) Sickness benefit:

A scheme of sickness benefit to compensate for loss of earnings arising out of illness is recommended under which all rural persons within the age group 18 to 60 will, on hospitalisation in a recognised hospital, be entitled to the benefit for a maximum of 90 days at the rate of the daily minimum wage rate for unskilled labour in agriculture. The benefit will be restricted to those from families whose annual income is less than Rs. 6,400 at 1990-91 prices.

(vii) Crop Insurance Scheme :

The comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme must cover all States and all crops. The restriction in the scheme covering only those who take loans from Co-operatives, Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks should be done away with. A system of differential premium rates for the existing clientel at lower leve and for those who do not take recourse to cooperatives etc. for their credit needs at slightly higher level could be fixed.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES:

(i) Right to work as a Fundamental Right with certain qualifications and an Employment Guarantee Act to implement this;

(ii) A comprehensive Central legislation for agricultural labour providing for their protection and welfare;

(iii) A National Commission for Bonded Labour functioning as a quasi-judicial Authority to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976;

(iv) A model legislation for protection of home based workers and their welfare;

(v) Land Tribunals at the local level for speedy disposal of land reforms cases.

INSTITUTIONAL MACHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

(vi) Active involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of various recommendations of the NCRL; and

(vii) A separate Department of Rural Labour at the Centre and in the States with an independent Directorate of Rural Labour in the States to deal with all aspects of Rural Labour, etc.

All Ministries/Departments concerned with specific recommendations have duly examined the recommendations. The Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour *inter-alia* reflecting Government response to all major recommendations has already been laid on the Table of the House on 3-2-93 in fulfilment of Assurance given during Short Duration Discussion on 4-8-92.

The Government of India have enacted several laws like the Minimum Wages Act, the Payment of Wages Act, the Equal Remuneration Act, the Payment of Gratuity Act, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act etc. for protection of identified categories of unorganised labour. Enforcement of these laws is reviewed from time to time. Apart from this, the Government also undertakes welfare activities which cover workers in iron ore, manganese and chrome ore mines, limestone and dolomite mines, mica mines, beedi industry and cinema workers. The working of these welfare schemes has been streamlined and their implementation substantially stepped up, both in quality and quantity. A group Insurance scheme for beedi workers has been taken up since 1-4-92. In addition, the Central and State Governments have taken up several other insurance and social security schemes covering landless agricultural labour and weavers, rickshaw-pullers, Auto-Rickshaw Drivers, IRDP beneficiaries and poor families etc. Several State Governments are also running old age pension schemes with varying eligibility criteria and pension rates. The State Government of Kerala have set up several Welfare Funds for different occupations under which a number of social sacurity and welfare schemes are being implemented for a large number of unorganised workers in rural areas. The State Government of Gujarat are also implementing a Group Insurance Scheme for rural workers.

The package of anti-poverty programmes such as IRDP, Jawahar Rojgar Yojna and schemes like Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Employment Assurance Scheme is aimed at bettering the lot of rural workers including the agricultural workers, who form the bulk of the unorganised workers. The number of families assisted under the IRDP Scheme during the year 1991-92, 1992-93, and 1993-94 were 25, 36, 566, 20, 68, 773 and 25,34,925 respectively and during the years 1994-95, 21,15,097 families were expected to benefit from the scheme. The fund allotted under the scheme for the year 1994-95 was Rs. 1098.22 crores.

The Employment Generation under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (in terms of lakhs mandays) during the years 1991-92, 1992 93, and 1993-94 were 8092, 7821 and 9523 respectively. The fund allotment for this scheme for 1994-95 was Rs. 2800 crores.

The Employment Assurance Scheme, which was introduced w.e.f. 2nd October, 1993, was launched in 1754 backward blocks and has now been extended to 2443 blocks. The fund allotted for 1994-95 were Rs. 1200 crores.

Besides, there is a scheme known as Development of Women and Children in rural areas which was launched with the objective of bringing about economic and social upliftment of rural women below the poverty line using a group approach for taking up income generating activities suited to their skills and aptitude.

The scheme operates in conjunction with TRYSEM and IRDP.

Under the 8th Plan also, emphasis has been laid on the improvement of quality of employment in the unorganised sector units in terms of earnings, conditions of work and social secuirty.

Rationalisation of Wages

7670. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee of Labour Ministers constituted by the Labour Ministry for the purpose of rationalisation of wages has recommended the introduction of variable dearness allowances system linking the rise of consumer price index with wages; and

(b) if so, when that Committee submitted the recommendations and what steps have been taken by Government to implement the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) As a follow up to the recommendations of the 41st Labour Minister's Conference held in August, 1992, a Committee consisting of the Labour Ministers of the 11 States, namely, Arunchal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Pondicherry, Rajashtan, Sikkim and West Bengal was constituted under the chairmanship of Labour Minister of West Bengal. The Committee finalised its recommendations in its last meeting held on August 6, 1993. The Committee while delibrating on the agenda issue of, "Uniform Policy regarding Minimum Wages", has, *inter-alia*, recommended that the minimum wages should have a component of variable dearness allowance linked with the consumer price index number to be adjusted at reasonable rates, so as to neutralise per point rise in price on the basis of half yearly average automatically. The Government, as a follow up of the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour, which also made a similar recommendation, have already conveyed this to all the State Governments/U.Ts. Administration for their consideration and necessary action.

Fulfilment of Demands of Workers

7671. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state: (a) whether he had recently claimed that 90 per cent of the demands of the workers put forwad by the Central Labour Unions about two and a half years ago had been fulfilled; and

(b) if so, the details of those demands and the manner of their fulfilment till date?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Trade Unions had made the following demands :

1. Pension Scheme
2. Raising Bonus Ceiling
3. Finalising the DA slabs for PSU employees
4. Wage revision in PSUs.
5. Bringing of PF coverage to all employees
6. Increasing PF contribution in the Textile industry to 10 per cent etc.
7. Revival of sick units.
8. Setting up of Second National Commission for labour
9. Labour Cell in Planning Commis mission.

The following demands have been fulfilled.

(i) *Wape Revision in PSUs*: The DPE have issued guidelines for the 5th round of wage negotiations under which the management of PSUs have been delegated full autonomy to conclude long-term settlements with their workers unions.